

Privacy Policy

People with Disabilities are

PEOPLE FIRST

Sometimes people without disabilities feel awkward and don't know what to say or how to act around a person with a disability.

Remember that people with disabilities are **people** first. The disability does not define the person.

People with disabilities have goals, dreams, wants and desires. The need for love, appreciation, fun, respect and the opportunity to be productive and valued are the same for people with and without disabilities.

It is important to use language and actions that avoid stereotyping people in inappropriate ways.

General Do's and Do Not's.....

The following examples are designed to increase your comfort level when speaking or interacting with people who have disabilities. If you do not know what to do or say, ASK. Allow the person with the disability to assist you.

Always put the person first. Make reference to the person first, then the disability. If the disability is not relevant, there is no need to mention it.

Talk about the disability if it comes up naturally. Don't pry. Be guided by the wishes of the person with the disability.

When in doubt, ask if you can help. Don't hover. If assistance is needed then you can offer. Take the answer that is given and follow-up with "if you need assistance I'll be here".

Remember a person who has a disability isn't necessarily chronically sick or unhealthy. People with disabilities are not conditions or diseases.

Do not label people with disabilities as poor, superhuman, courageous, or unfortunate.

Be careful not to assume that a person with one disability also has others. For example, a person who uses a wheelchair does not necessarily have a mental disability, nor is a person who is blind likely to have a hearing impairment.

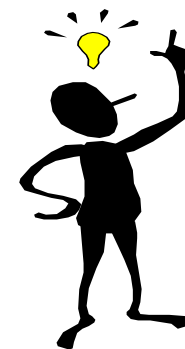
There is no need to discourage children from asking questions about people with disabilities. Open communication helps overcome fear of the unknown and prevents misleading attitudes.

Don't make assumptions about what a person can and cannot do.

Avoid using trendy phrases such as "handicappable" or "physically challenged" to describe people with disabilities. They can be patronizing and inaccurate. It is best to use simple language such as "people with disabilities."

Overcome your fear of the unknown. Sometimes people don't help people who have disabilities because they're afraid of doing or saying the wrong thing.

When planning events always check that you have ensured physical and communication access.



Should I Help?

Be considerate of the extra time it might take for a person with a disability to get things done or said. Let him/her set the pace in walking or talking.

Be yourself and use common sense.

Use a normal tone of voice.

When talking to a person who has a disability, speak directly to that person, not through their friend, companion, parents or interpreter.

Speak as you would normally speak. There is no need to avoid common expressions such as “see ya later”, “gotta run”, or “did you hear the one about...” that seem to relate to the persons disability. Being overly conscious of a persons disability can cause discomfort and awkwardness.

**Help break down the
barriers. Seek to
understand and
educate yourself and
others about
disabilities.**



How Do I Act?

Interacting With People With Disabilities

**Remember, a disability
is not a handicap,
attitudes are.**